

Specimens of lignite and fossil wood from Nipál, were presented on the part of Subadar JODA SINGH.

Specimens of quartz fossil wood and shells from Van Dieman's Land, presented by C. K. ROBISON, Esq.

A note on the teeth of the *Mastodon angustidens* of the Siwalik hills, was received by Captain CAUTLEY.

Also, by Dr. FALCONER and Capt. CAUTLEY, a memoir on the *Felis Cristata*, a new fossil tiger from the Siwalik hills.

A skeleton of a tortoise (*CAREY'S Kuchuya*), presented by Mr. J. T. PEARSON.

Specimens of the Indian Barbet, (*Bucco Indicus*,) Woodpecker, (*Picus Macei*,) and smaller green pigeon, (*Vinago Vernans*,) presented by Lieut. C. MONTRIOU, Ind. Navy.

A specimen of the wandering Albatros, (*Diomedea exulans*,) presented by J. CHILD, Esq.

A specimen of the Bald Ibis, (*Ibis calva*,) presented by Dr. A. CAMPBELL.

Skulls of the tiger, (*Felis Tigris*,) Leopard, (*F. Leopardus*,) long-lipped bear, (*Ursus labiatus*,) and Gurriyal, (*Garialis Gangeticus*,) presented by Dr. McCOSH.

A specimen of the ornamented snake, (*Coluber Ornata*,) presented by Mr. KYD.

A specimen of *Gecko vittatus* (var.) by Dr. A. JACKSON.

XIII.—Address read before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, on the 27th January, 1836. By the Rev. JOHN WILSON, President.

[This address, obligingly communicated to us by the author, gives so valuable a review of all that has been done by the Bombay Society, that we make no apology, but rather feel a pride in transferring it to our pages entire: the rather because Bombay does not yet boast a Journal of its own, like Madras does. Since the establishment of the latter journal, we have discontinued inserting the Proceedings of the Society at that Presidency, conceiving the means for their preservation and circulation to be more appropriately provided for.—ED.]

This Society has now been in existence for upwards of thirty years; and it may not be improper for us, in our present circumstances, briefly to advert to its past proceedings, and to some of the various subjects of inquiry, and especially those connected with our situation in western India, which still invite our attention.

In the discourse delivered at the formation of the institution, by its first President Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, that great man declared himself "ambitious of no higher office than that of conveying to India the desires and wants of the learned at home." A more worthy "representative of the curiosity of Europe," could not have presented himself in this country. It must be admitted, however, that, powerful as was his influence, and remarkable as has been the zeal and success of the members in prosecuting some of the objects proper for investigation by an Asiatic Society, their contributions on the topics to which he more particularly directed attention, have not been so numerous and extensive as might have been reasonably expected.

On Natural History, on which he dwells at greatest length, there are in our Transactions only a few distinct contributions, while the subject is only partially adverted to in the papers descriptive of particular districts of the country. This is undoubtedly a matter of regret, for the

study, directly conversant as it is with the works of God, and with the intimations which they give of His wisdom, power, and goodness, is, in all circumstances, possessed of the highest interest, and conduces both to intellectual gratification and to moral improvement; and in such a country as India, so vast in its extent, and so grand and multifarious in its productions, it is possessed of peculiar charms. It is a study, in many of its branches, so intimately connected with national resources, and the useful arts, and the means of humane amelioration, that it is powerfully recommended to every economist and philanthropist. It is a study in which most who have received a liberal education may engage, and to advance which, all who give it an ordinary share of attention, may considerably contribute. The sojourners in Bombay have, in the mountains, forests, and islands, in the neighbourhood, innumerable objects, connected especially with Geology, Botany, and Zoology, which both from their comparative novelty, and intrinsic interest invite attention. The Society cannot do better than encourage their investigation, and imitate in reference to them, the laudable procedure of the sister institution in Bengal, with regard to those of a similar nature more particularly connected with that province, and among whose highest honours must ever be, its having numbered among its members such men as ROXBURGH and WALLICH, and fostered their earliest attempts to unfold the beauties and mysteries of creation. The report of observation and discovery connected with them, if given in this place, would form an agreeable entertainment even to those who may be most ardent and persevering in their researches into the other important objects of the Society's investigation. That a studious attention to both of them, by individuals, is not impracticable, is well evinced in the cases of JONES, and COLEBROOKE, and CAREY, and others, who have been distinguished in India both for their science and literature; and who have been not less remarkable for their knowledge and expositions of the thought and feeling of man, as connected with the objects of his devout regard, or superstitious reverence, and the language by which he holds communion with his fellows, than for their lively cognizance, and philosophic interpretation, of the varied phenomena of nature.

The Statistics of any country are intimately connected with its Political Economy, and are consequently highly worthy of attention. Their importance was not so generally admitted, as at present, on the formation of our Society; but it is strikingly set forth by Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH. The tables which he himself presented, connected with the population of Bombay, and the remarks with which he accompanied them, are valuable. Similar ones, of a later date, are desiderata, and when compared with those given by him, would furnish curious information. The Notices of Jambusar and Loni, given in our Transactions, by Drs. MARSHALL and COATES; and of certain districts of the southern Maratha Country, and of the *Jharejas*, of *Kach*, in the Journal of the home Society, by Dr. BIRD, and Lieutenant BURNES, are good specimens of what is required of other localities and tribes. Without the assistance of our liberal Government, little can be done with satisfaction in this department. Such assistance, by instituting special inquiries, and by delivering up documents already in its possession, or which could be procured by application to its judges, and magistrates, and revenue officers, it could easily, and with great advantage to itself, render*.

Only one paper on the subject of Political Economy, as connected with

* A proposition has, I understand, been made, by an able and zealous officer of this Presidency (Capt. T. B. JERVIS) to the different Governments of India, relative to the periodical publication of the returns of population, revenue, and cultivated and waste lands.

India, has been laid before our Society. It is by Mr. BRUCE, and has been transmitted to England, where it will not fail to be appreciated.

Of all the topics of inquiry meriting attention, that of the History and Present Condition of the People, in the different provinces, in regard to language, religion, literature, science and art, means of support, and manners and customs, is paramount. It is very extensive; and has met, from the members of the Society, with considerable attention.

The *Parsis*, the great body of whom dwell amongst us, present themselves as special objects of inquiry. The history of their original country, has been ably unfolded by Sir JOHN MALCOLM; and on its ancient chronology previous to the conquest by ALEXANDER, and its state from the battle of Arbela in A. C. 331, to the rise of ARDESHIR BABEGAN, much light has been cast by our late learned President, Colonel VANS KENNEDY. Mr. ERSKINE's papers respecting them, are remarkably interesting, as containing an able review, and analysis, of the Works of ANQUETIL DU PERRON, who followed Dr. HYDE as the expositor of their tenets; the results of his own observation; and valuable disquisitions on their sacred books and ancient languages. The researches of Professor RASK, in his paper given to this Society, whatever may be the opinions formed of the particular conclusions at which he has arrived, and it must be admitted he has reasoned ingeniously in their support, are also interesting. For the original tracts, with remarks, in the course of being published in France by M. MOHL, we owe our gratitude. The History of the Early Kings of Persia by MIRKHOND, translated by Mr. SHEA; and the History of Vartan and the Armenians, by Mr. NEUMANN; and of the Shah Namah, by Mr. ATKINSON, for which we are indebted to the Oriental Translation Fund, contain much historical information on the religion of ZOROASTER. Still more may be expected from the translation of that singularly curious work, the Dabistan, which is about to appear. The curiosity of the public respecting the Parsis, however, is far from being satisfied, as is evident from the inquiries which frequently reach this place both from London and Paris. We need a more exact translation of the books which they esteem sacred, than that which is furnished by ANQUETIL DU PERRON. Such a translation has been promised by Professor BURNOURF, whose attainments in oriental literature, and ardour in oriental study, afford good ground for hope that our wishes respecting it will be realized. Should he fail, the attempt may be made in Bombay, where there are still a very few Zand scholars among the Zoroastrians to be found, and whose assistance, as well as that to be furnished by the translations into Gujurathi, may be procured*. We require information particularly on their popular superstitions, and domestic manners and customs, and general habits, as exhibited to the native community, and which, there is reason to believe, differ not a little from those generally observed by their European acquaintances, and for which they have received, in the opinion of the most intelligent of their own number, a more than *quantum sufficit* of credit. It was with the view of adding my mite to the information possessed on these topics, and not because I conceived it possessed of any intrinsic merit, that I lately presented the Society with a translation of their General SIROZE. There are extant narratives of their settlement and history in India, versions of which should be presented to the Oriental Translation Fund. At a late meeting of the Committee of Correspondence of the Royal Asiatic Society, some of the more liberal natives in Bombay, were invited to form themselves into an association, with the view of aiding in collecting information on some of the topics to which I have now adverted. Little, I fear, can be expected from them, without the co-operation of

* Six Fargards of the Vandidad can also be procured in Sanskrita.

European scholars, or without the proposal to them of special queries calculated to direct them in their communications. I am decidedly of opinion that it would be of advantage to both parties, were some of them associated with ourselves; and I would fondly hope that should any of them, possessed of competent attainments and zeal, and a respectable character and influence, ask membership of our body, it should be readily accorded.

There is no institution which has furnished more able and interesting illustrations connected with the Musalmáns than our Society. The question, so interesting in the history of the errors of the human mind, Was MUHAMMAD an impostor or an enthusiast, has been discussed by our late President Colonel VANS KENNEDY; and though many may dissent, as I myself do, from the conclusion at which he arrives, the ingenuity with which he conducts his argument, and the varied learning which he displays must be readily acknowledged. The same distinguished orientalist has furnished us with the most correct estimate of the literature of the Musalmáns in Persia, which is extant; and has given us a minute and precise abstract of the Muhammadan Municipal Law, with a constant reference to acknowledged authorities, and with an arrangement particularly luminous, being suggested by that of BLACKSTONE in his Commentaries on the Laws of England. His paper furnishes an important aid to the understanding of the state of Government, and society in general, in Muhammadan countries. The points at issue between the *Shias* and *Sunnis*, and which have been, and still are, the cause of the greatest distractions and animosities among the Moslems, are well illustrated by the translations and remarks of Sir JOHN MALCOLM; and the sentiments of the *Sufis* and *Mehdivis*, by those of the late Lieutenant GRAHAM and Colonel MILES. The account of the AKHLAK-I-NASIRI, by Lieutenant FRISSELL, and the translation of one of the discourses of SADI by Mr. ROSS, throw much light on the Musalmán Economics and Ethics, both theoretical and practical. What we chiefly want in reference to the Muhammadan religion, is a fuller account, drawn from a comparison of all the existing authorities, of the state of Arabia at the time of its origin, and from which we could form a more enlightened judgment than we do, of those great revolutions brought about by its author; of the history of its religious influence, distinguished as much as possible from that of the military exploits and civil arrangements of its followers, which have hitherto almost altogether engrossed attention; of the general arguments by which its doctors have urged its pretensions in opposition to Christianity*; of the Bohoras†

* Some interesting information on this subject, is to be found in the *Controversial Tracts*, by the Rev. Henry MARTYN, and his opponents in Persia, and the preface prefixed to them by Professor LEE, and in the last of the letters addressed to me, by H'AJI' MAHAMMAD H'ASHIM, and published in Bombay. As the discussion of the points at issue, however, is an ancient one, it seems desirable that a collection should be made of the hints respecting it which are to be found in the Musalmán works of theology.

† To any person, whose leisure may permit inquiry into this body of Musalmáns, the following memorandum written by me on a visit to Surat in the beginning of last year, may not be unacceptable. "The Bohoras of Surat are divided into three sects, respectively denominated Ali, Sulimán, and Dáud. In the first of these, there are only five or six families; in the second, about fifty; and in the third, about five thousand, with a population of about twelve thousand. They have accounts of their tribe, one of which I have seen in Arabic, which carry back their history about six or seven hundred years. They generally support themselves by the vending and manufacture of cloths, hardware, household furniture, &c. They profess to be quite distinct from the agricultural Bohoras, who are to be found in the Baroch districts, and of whom a considerable number of families have now also settled in Surat.

"The Bohoras are under the religious, and, to a great extent, the civil government of a Mullá, whose head quarters were originally in Arabia. The Mullá in

and other curious sectaries ; and of the peculiar practices, superinduced probably by intercourse with the Hindus, of those who profess it in India, and particularly in the provinces with which we are most intimately connected. That the latter subject is not unworthy of interest, will appear to any reader of the work lately published by Dr. HERKLOTS, and to the notices given of certain festivals by M. GARCIN DE TASSY. From these documents, as well as from Colonel KENNEDY's paper on the religion introduced into India by the Emperor AKBAR, it appears that the followers of Muhammad, cannot only, when circumstances tempt them, lay aside their intolerance, but accommodate themselves to existing prejudices, and indulge in the boldest speculations. In the almost universal neglect of historical records by the subjugated Hindus, we must principally look to the Musalmáns for any historical information connected with this country which refers to the times which intervene between the commencement of their conquest, and that of the European powers. The History by FERISHTA, translated by Colonel BRIGGS, though neither, as was to be expected, very philosophical nor rigid, is valuable. Captain ROWLANDSON and Dr. BIRD, have done well to translate two works which treat of the history of Malabar and Gujerat. They contain much interesting information. Another history of the latter province, by a very intelligent Bráhmán, but principally from Muhammadan authorities, and which may prove worthy of translation, was lately presented to our Society by our zealous Secretary. There are materials to be found, in different places, sufficient to throw light upon the principal occurrences in almost every province of India.

Of various tribes of the Hindus, as the Katis, the Bhíls, the Banjaris, the Pandu Kolis, the Dakhan Kunbis, and the Karadi Bráhmans, and the inhabitants of *Sindh*, very curious notices are to be found in our Transactions. Of many other tribes, accounts have appeared in separate publications*. Many more, however, with marked natural peculiarities, and in a strange social state, still remain to be described. Those who

Surat sits upon a throne, and is highly respected. He is thrice saluted by every person when he is *in cathedra* ; and his attendants give him all the attentions which the princes of the land receive when they are in *Darbár*. He has deputies in all the towns in India where Bohoras are to be found, and even in Maskat, Basora, Jadda, and Mokha. He has a very large income, arising principally from donations at births, marriages, and deaths ; but from his funds, the poor of the sect, whether resident in Surat or occasional visitors, are supplied. He nominates his successor, having a principal regard to his talents, information, and capacity to govern.

"The Mullá, or Mulláji as he is called by way of distinction, reads the Korán, and addresses the people during five or six days of the Moharram, and one day during the month of Ramazán, when his auditors are numerous. In the part of Surat principally inhabited by Bohorás, there are many courts, in each of which there is a Mullá to conduct worship early in the morning. The people, however, seem most to relish praying at the tombs, or great mausoleums, which contain the sepulchres of some of the ancient Mullás and their relatives. They actually, as we observed, kiss the chunam covering of the graves !

"In regard to marriage, it may be observed, that the number of wives permitted by the Korán is allowed, as in the case of other sects of Musalmáns. The follies of the Hindus have found a place among them, in the manner in which marriages are contracted and celebrated. Girls are espoused at the early age of five years, and without much regard, on the part of their parents, to the age of those with whom they are united. The processions, and feastings, are conducted much as among the other classes of the natives.

"The shaving off the hair, which is viewed as a kind of sacrament, is performed on the 7th or 21st day after the birth, either of a son or daughter.

"Expulsion from caste follows the practice of gross immoralities, and particularly the drinking of ardent spirits.

"Funerals are conducted with considerable solemnity. Those of the higher classes are attended by the Mullá."

* Among the fullest, and most interesting of these, is the History of the Rámóshis, lately published by Captain MACKINTOSH.

are found resident in the jungles, and in mountainous districts, and who are probably the remains of the Aborigines of the country, are particularly worthy of investigation. Attention to them is called for, by all who desire to advance their civilization, and to elevate them from their present degradation. Description must precede any considerable efforts made for their improvement. Perhaps some similarities may be discovered in their language, religion, and customs, which may lead to important conjectures as to the ancient history of India. Of many of them it has been already ascertained, that they have had no connexion with Bráhmaism, except in so far as they may have felt its unhallowed influence in excluding them from the common privileges of humanity, and banishing them to the wilds, or dooming them to ignorance, and unwilling and unrewarded servitude*.

Though on the Hindu religion and literature in general, our publications contain rather scanty observations, some of our members have added greatly to the information communicated by the distinguished literati of the other side of India, and of Europe. Our Society was the first body to submit to the public a proposal for a union for the promotion of translations from the Sanskrita. Its claim to this honour, it is right again to re-assert. It will be established by a reference to a letter addressed to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, in 1806, by Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, and published as an appendix to the first volume of our Transactions†. Such translations were practically encouraged by the Society itself, in the case of the *Liláwati*, a treatise on Arithmetic and Geometry by BHASKARA ACHARYA, and the *Prabodh Chandrodaya*, a curious allegorical play illustrative of the opinions of the Vedantikas, and both published by the late Dr. JOHN TAYLOR. The first general account, of any considerable size, of the Hindu Pantheon, is by one of our members, Major EDWARD MOOR. In Colonel KENNEDY'S Ancient and Hindu Mythology, we have a work, than which none more important, if we refer either to original quotations from the *Shástras*, or learned disquisitions, has yet appeared. I make this remark with the more freedom, that circumstances called me, on the publication of the work, to animadvert on the estimate which it forms of the moral character of Bráhmaism in a manner which gave the learned author offence. In the *Essay on the Vedanta* by the same gentleman, we have the best account of that very curious system of speculation, considered in a philosophical point of view, which has yet appeared,—an account which proves it to be a system of spiritual pantheism, and as such entirely different, except in occasional expression, from that of the Mystics of Europe, to which it had been maintained to be similar by Sir WILLIAM JONES, and other writers‡. It was in this place that the first defence, by a Native, of both the exoteric and esoteric systems of Hinduism, in reply to those who seek to propagate the principles of our Holy Faith, appeared; and it was here that a rejoinder, embracing briefly the consideration of

* See particularly Mr. BABER'S Answers to the Queries of a Committee of the House of Lords on the state of Slavery in the South West of India.

† Page 310.

‡ In the works of the Mystics, and of the pious writers, to whom Sir WILLIAM JONES alludes in the course of his reasonings, there are figures of speech, and other expressions, very similar to those used by the Vedántists. Others, still more strikingly similar, could easily be produced. I give one from the Poems of RICHARD BAXTER.

“ But O ! how wisely hast thou made the twist !
To love thee and myself do well consist.
Love is the closure of connaturals ;
The soul's return to its originals :
As every brook is toward the ocean bent :
And all things to their proper element :
And as the inclination of the sight,
How small soever is unto the light :

both these subjects, was published. About two years ago, a portion of the *Rigveda*, the most considerable which has yet been printed, was published in *Sanskrita*, *Marathi*, and English, by one of our members. A translation of the whole of this work, to which I believe Prof. H. H. WILSON has turned his attention, and of the *Bhagawata Purána*, which, though it cannot claim an antiquity much exceeding that of six hundred years, is certainly the greatest practical authority at present, at least in the West of India, are greatly to be desired. On the different sects of the Hindus, and on their provincial superstitions, much light has yet to be cast. On the North of this Presidency, we have the *Vaishnavas*; in our immediate neighbourhood, the *Smartas*; and in the South, the *Shaivas* or *Lingavants*, in the practice of all their peculiarities. In the Dakshan, we have a general worship of deified heroes, as yet unnoticed, except in the most incidental manner. Many curious classes of mendicants, of whom little or nothing is known*, are to be found within the sphere of our peculiar observation. The religion of the Jainas, on which most valuable manuscripts, procured by Mr. WATHEN, are deposited in our library, is still, in many respects, to be unfolded. Our Transactions have only one paper, by Captain McMURDO, which refers to it. In the possession of the Jainas, there are many works calculated to throw much light on the religious history of India in general, with the use of which some of them would not be unwilling to favour a European student. I fondly trust and believe, that there are among our members, those who will continue to contribute, as circumstances may call them, to the exposition of the systems of faith, which have so long exercised their sway in this country, and the various literary works, which, though, unlike those of Greece and Rome, they are of little or no use in the cultivation of taste, are valuable as they illustrate the tendency of these systems in their connexion with social and public life, and as they explain a language the most copious in its vocables, and powerful in its grammatical forms, in which any records exist. Destitute of a knowledge of these systems, and the works in which they are embodied, the native character, and the state of native society, will never be sufficiently understood, a right key obtained to open the native mind, and all desirable facilities enjoyed for the introduction among the people of a body of rational and equitable law, and the propagation of the Gospel and the promotion of general education. There are some respectable patrons of the latter supremely important work, who overlook its importance; but their number is on the decrease.

As the touch'd needle pointeth toward the pole;
Thus unto thee inclines the holy soul:
It trembleth and is restless till it come
Unto thy bosom where it is at home."

No person who is familiar with the *Upanishads* can fail to mark the coincidence of the language of BAXTER in the preceding passage, with that of the Transcendentalists of India. This coincidence of language, however, does not warrant the inference that there is the least agreement of statement. In proof of this position, we have merely to quote the lines which follow those now given.

"Yet no such union dare the soul desire
As parts have with the whole, and sparks to fire;
But as dependent, low, subordinate,
Such as thy will of nothing did create.
As tendeth to the sun the smallest eye
Of silly vermin, or the poorest fly.
My own salvation when I make my end,
Full mutual love is all that I intend,
And in this closure though I happy be,
Its by intending, and admiring thee."

* Of one of these, the *Mánbhavas*, whom I had particularly in view in making this remark, I have just received an interesting account from Captain A. MACKINTOSH, the author of the History of the Ramoshís.

They ought to consider that the situation of those to be instructed, is to be attended to, as well as the instructions to be delivered. While divine truth must be propagated with unwavering fidelity, and all hopes of ultimate success rest on its own potency, its suitableness to the general character of man, and the assistance of divine grace, judgment ought to be employed in the mode of its application to those who vary much in their creeds, and differ much in their moral practice. We have the highest authority for an accommodation such as that for which I plead. Though the great truths proclaimed by the apostle PAUL were the same in all circumstances, they were introduced in very different ways to the Jewish Rabbis and people, and to the members of the Athenian Areopagus. I must hold, that there is no little unsuitableness in India, in addressing a Pantheist as a Polytheist, and *vice versa* : in speaking to a Jaina as to a Bráhmán ; in condemning that at random which the natives may suppose to be unknown, and in using theological terms, and general phrases, without any very definite sense of their application by the natives themselves. The more a knowledge of Hinduism and of Hindu literature is possessed by any teacher, the more patiently and uninterruptedly will he be listened to by the people, and the more forcibly will he be enabled, and principally by contrast and concession, to set forth the authority, and the excellence, of the doctrines of Christianity.

In connexion with the subject to which I have now adverted, I may allude to the peculiar duty which devolves on us of collecting Sanskrita manuscripts. They are to be found in a purer state in the Dakshan than in any other part of India, and the poverty of the Bráhmans leads them readily to part with them. Those which were lately purchased by us are very valuable.

The contributions of the members of our Society to the elucidation of *Hindu Antiquities*, have done much to extend and support its credit. The proximity of the ancient excavations, which may be classed among the wonders of the world, could not fail to excite curiosity and inquiry. The descriptions and illustrations of those of *Gharipur* (Elephanta), *Sashti* (Salsette), *Karali* (Carlee), *Verula* (Ellora), *Bag* and *Ajanta**, though a few errors and oversights may be detected in them, are highly interesting. Mr. ERSKINE has satisfactorily shown the distinguishing characteristics of those of them which are respectively to be attributed to the Baud'dhas and Jainas, and the Bráhmans. It is to be hoped that the inscriptions which are to be found on some of them, and which are in the Sanskrita language, and in ancient characters very similar to those which have lately been published in the ably conducted *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, will be soon understood. The Rev. Mr. STEVENSON has already been successful, to a great extent, in decyphering, and translating those of the temples of Karali, and thus leading to inferences by no means unimportant. Some of those of Kanadi, on Salsette, I should think, from a partial trial, present no greater difficulties than those which have been already overcome. The stone bearing the inscription of the temples at Elephanta, we learn from DIEGO de Couto the Portuguese Annalist, was sent to JOHN the Third of Portugal about the year 1534, and is probably now either in the Royal Museum of Lisbon, or in the University of Coimbra. The Royal Asiatic Society may, without difficulty, procure a transcript. There are excavated temples in the country, such as those of Nasik, and Junar, and others which have been erected, such as those of Abu, Palitana and Girnar, which have not yet been particularly described. What we principally require in reference to them all, is information as to the time at which, and the views with which, they were constructed ; an estimate of them as works of art, or as indicative of the resources of those to whom they are to be ascribed ; and an inquiry into the religious rites and services, for which they have been appropriated, and the moral impressions

* Written by Messrs. SALT, ERSKINE, Col. SYKES, &c.

which they seem fitted to make on those resorting to them. They are worthy of attention only as they may illustrate the civil and religious history, or practices, of the country. The grants of land, engraven on copper-plates, many of which are still to be found in different parts of the country, are next to them in importance in the advancement of antiquarian research. One of these was translated by Dr. TAYLOR. Mr. WATHEN has been successful in decyphering the most ancient of those in our museum; and the results, as stated by him in his communication in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for August last, are both curious and useful. Ancient coins are occasionally found in different parts of the Presidency, and the Native States to the northward, which may aid in the correction, or enlargement, of such Genealogical Tables as have been lately published by Mr. PRINSEP of Calcutta*.

There is a small body of *Armenians* in Bombay, from which something interesting might be learnt. A dissertation by one of them on the antiquity of their native language, with notes by Mr. DICKINSON, has lately been transmitted by us to the Royal Asiatic Society, and cannot fail to be acceptable. There cannot be a doubt that the Armenians can fill up important blanks in our Church History, which, to the undue neglect of the orientals, is principally formed on the authority of the Roman and Byzantine Fathers.

The *Beni-Israel* of Bombay, and the adjoining territories, amount to about eight thousand. It is to be regretted that no considerable account of them has yet appeared, particularly as they have been long settled in the country, refuse the appellation of *Jew*, and are probably a portion of the Ten Tribes, never amalgamated, as the body of them probably was, with those of Judah and Benjamin.

The researches of our members on antiquities, and other subjects of observation and rational inquiry, have not been confined to India; but I cannot longer detain you by alluding either to their results, or by attempting to form, what is unnecessary, and what in me would be presumptuous, an estimate of the enterprize and intelligent observation and research of our MALCOLMS, ELPHINSTONES, POTTINGERS, RICHES and BURNESES. The contiguity of our Presidency to Persia, Arabia, and Egypt; and the prospect of increased intercourse with these countries, by steam navigation, afford ground to hope that our geographical and historical knowledge of them will ere long be greatly enlarged. There is scarcely a country 'of Asia, which, even, in our present circumstances, does not furnish visitors to Bombay, who prove themselves ready to communicate to intelligent inquirers, information on places never as yet surveyed by any modern European traveller. Mr. WATHEN has been able, from conversing with Muhammadan pilgrims, to prepare a brief, but interesting, memoir of Chinese Tartary†.

I owe to the meeting an apology for the many imperfections of the sketch which I have rapidly taken. I have rather endeavoured to mark our progress, than to point out, what would perhaps have contributed more to our encouragement, the advantages and means of further advancement. Our Society, I may be permitted to hope, will soon again be inspired with its pristine zeal, at the same time that it is directed by its accumulated experience; maintain the character which it has earned for itself; and prove not unworthy of its incorporation with the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, an incorporation which must be admitted, notwithstanding some disadvantages, to be beneficial, as it secures that literary sympathy and communication which is greatly to be valued, and the circulation of our papers, with no expense to ourselves, and now in a convenient form, throughout the world.

* Such coins are occasionally worn as personal ornaments by natives, who have no idea of their value.

† See Asiatic Society's *Journal* for December, 1835.